

April 2009

Santa Rosa County District 3 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner



District 3

Commissioner &
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W.D. "Don" Salter

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Thank you – County Employees

The months of March and April have brought numerous challenges to the residents and employees of our county. We have had record setting rainfall which created flooding in many parts of the county, especially the north end. Many homes were damaged by the flooding and rising water from our rivers and streams. As bad as it was, we are thankful no one was injured. I want to commend all our employees for their outstanding performance, especially our emergency management division, public works department and building inspections department. I have received numerous phone calls and e-mails from our citizens sharing their gratitude for a job well done. Once again, thanks to everyone for an outstanding job!



Photo: Recent flooding waters covered Deaton Bridge.

Military Appreciation Month



The month of May is Military Appreciation Month. As we go through our daily jobs and lives, please take a moment and remember we still live in the greatest country in the world; a country where we still enjoy more FREEDOMS than any other society. These freedoms didn't just happen. Our founding fathers soundly embedded them into our Constitution, but it has been our military men and women who have defended them in battle with many paying the ultimate sacrifice – their lives. We all should always remember – Freedom isn't Free! So, please thank our military everyday for their service and especially during the month of May!

Emerald Coast Honor Flight

The 4th Emerald Coast Honor Flight will be April 29. As you may know, this program allows all WWII Veterans the opportunity to visit their memorial in Washington, DC at no cost to the veteran. Each flight will carry 103 veterans, 36 guardians (\$300 paid by each guardian) and a medical staff. The total cost per flight is approximately \$80,000 and is paid for by sponsors and individual donations. The April 29 flight is a very special flight as the major sponsor will be



Continued on page 2...



Santa Rosa District 3 News

Thank You Students & Staff!
Amazing Honor Flight donation
Total of \$35,711.42
From Santa Rosa Schools
(as of April 20)

CANAL STREET OFFICES	\$435.00
BERRYHILL ADMIN COMPLEX	\$1157.00
ADMIN SUPPORT COMPLEX	\$62.00
GULF BREEZE HIGH SCHOOL	\$1,636.19
NAVARRE HIGH SCHOOL	\$4,000.00
MILTON HIGH SCHOOL	\$870.00
PACE HIGH SCHOOL	\$800.00
JAY HIGH SCHOOL	\$1,600.00
AVALON MIDDLE	\$800.00
BAGDAD ELEMENTARY	\$800.00
BENNET RUSSELL ELEMENTARY	\$800.00
BERRYHILL ELEMENTARY	\$1,600.00
CHUMUCKLA ELEMENTARY	\$800.00
DIXON PRIMARY	\$1,793.77
DIXON INTERMEDIATE	\$1,770.65
EAST MILTON ELEMENTARY	\$1,122.46
GULF BREEZE MIDDLE	\$3,974.07
HOLLEY NAVARRE PRIMARY	\$978.26
HOLLEY NAVARRE MIDDLE	\$1,600.00
JAY ELEMENTARY	\$800.94
KING MIDDLE	\$800.00
LOCKLIN TECH	\$1,600.00
MUNSON ELEMENTARY	\$347.30
ORIOLE BEACH ELEMENTARY	\$800.00
PEA RIDGE ELEMENTARY	\$240.13
SIMS MIDDLE	\$800.00
WEST NAVARRE INTERMEDIATE	\$2,400.00
WOODLAWN BEACH	\$1,323.65

"The Students of Santa Rosa County Schools". Our kids have been having fund raising events at all their schools for the last several months and have raised a total of \$36,000.00 to show their support for "America's Greatest Generation" our WWII Veterans.

Many of the veterans have visited our schools and shared their experiences with the students. This has been a wonderful history lesson for the kids and has also helped the Veterans feel appreciated and honored. I would encourage everyone to come to the Pensacola Airport on April 29 at 6 p.m. to help welcome home our Heroes. If you would like to get involved with fund raising for the next flight, please contact either me or Emily Spencer at (850) 983-1943.

- Don Salter, District 3 Commissioner
Commission Chair



Photo above: Santa Rosa County students present a check for \$25,000 for the April 29 Honor Flight to Congressman Jeff Miller on April 16.

Photo below: Pete Southerland, Commissioner Salter, WWII Veteran Cyrus Blackman and Sheriff Wendell Hall at the check presentation ceremony.

Operation Connect-Vet

OPERATION CONNECT – VET is a free transportation service for Santa Rosa County Veterans to the Veterans Affairs Joint Ambulatory Care Center on Highway 98 in Pensacola. Door-to-door rides any day of the week are available at this time. Call 981-7153 for registration.

The service is made possible by a joint partnership of the Elks National Foundation, the Milton Elks Lodge # 2377, Santa Rosa County Veterans Services, and Pensacola Bay Transportation.



Update On Our Military



Above: Lockheed F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

The Limited Record of Decision was released February 6. This sets the stage for the first 59 aircraft to be delivered to Eglin AFB beginning in 2010. Ground breaking ceremonies were held at Eglin AFB on March 20. A supplemental Environment Impact Study is underway and due for completion by September 2010 to determine basing for the remaining 48 aircrafts. The JSF will result in an increase of 4,885 military and dependents at Eglin AFB with a total economic impact of \$6 billion in Okaloosa and surrounding counties.

Deployment of the 7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg to Eglin AFB will occur between March and September 2011 involving approximately 10,000 military personnel and their dependents.

The Air Force Tanker contract for 189 aircraft was awarded to Northrup-Grumman in February 2008. The contract decision was contested by Boeing which triggered a GAO review that stopped the award of the contract and a rebid of the tanker contract. In the process, the

final decision was pulled from the Air Force and placed with the Secretary of Defense. He decided to wait until the new administration was in place in 2009. The Office of Management and Budget recommended in early March to delay replacement of the current fleet of KC-135 tankers for five years. The following day, the White House issued a statement that it is not their intention to delay the tanker program. The Air Force as well as some in Congress are considering a split contract with Boeing and Northrup-Grumman to replace the ageing tanker fleet. The replacement tanker contract is estimated to be between \$35 billion and \$40 billion, directly and indirectly employing 48,000 workers nationwide. The best guess is that we are 12 months away from a final decision.

The Limited Access Use Agreement between Santa Rosa County and the Navy to allow for limited use of runways and taxiways for the proposed Aviation Park is in Washington D.C. The agreement requires approval by the Navy and sign-off by the county board. The agreement will allow tenants in the Aviation Park access to a 6,000 foot runway to bring aircraft into the park for maintenance. This is a win-win arrangement for both the Navy and the county. It helps buffer the

base from residential encroachment and will bring high paying jobs to the county. We anticipate the agreement will be in place by June 2009 and the county can begin work on a hangar and a ramp as well as begin discussions with prospective tenants.

Representatives from the five Northwest Florida counties will travel to Washington D.C. in May for meetings and briefing from congressional leaders and the Pentagon on defense and related economic issues involving the beddown for the JSF, the 7th Special Forces Group, the KC-X Tanker contract and base encroachment prevention. The purpose of the annual trip is to strengthen relationships with congressional and military leaders and to re-emphasize our support for the military presence in our area. The military in our region recently reported by the Hass Center, accounts for 35 percent of the total economy. They also serve as an economic stabilizer during economic downturns. We need to let our military know how much they are appreciated, especially in May, which is Military Appreciation Month.

**-Pete Gandy
Military Consultant
TEAM Santa Rosa**



Above: Northrup-Grumman KC-45.



Santa Rosa District 3 News

Construction Underway for New Blackwater Correctional Facility

It's the one new business in Santa Rosa County that most folks will not want to patronize. TEAM Santa Rosa EDC, Inc. is proud to announce that construction on the new, privately operated Blackwater Correctional Facility is now underway and it has already begun providing new jobs for our local workforce.

According to Kyle Walker of White Construction, at the peak of its construction, there will be as many as 450 workers on site – many of them from Santa Rosa and surrounding counties. And that's for the construction phase alone. The GEO Group, Inc., which will operate the prison for the State of Florida, estimates that the facility will provide about 400 permanent jobs once it is operational.

GEO earned a contract from the State of Florida to build and operate the new prison, which is designed to conform to the strict Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards of the US Green Building Council.



LEED certification is achieved by incorporating environmentally friendly and energy conserving features into the building, lowering its overall carbon footprint. These features can include use of locally produced or recycled materials, designated car pool parking spots, as well as electrical and plumbing fixtures to reduce the use of electricity and water. Once certified, the facility will be one of only two certified "Green Buildings" in Santa Rosa and Escambia counties.

In addition to seeking LEED certification for its facility, GEO also committed to use as much local labor as possible in the construction and operation of the facility. White Construction is the prime contractor for the job. The company has selected subcontractors for much of the actual construction. As the project draws nearer to completion, TEAM Santa Rosa and Workforce EscaRosa will work with GEO to hold additional job fairs for permanent, non-construction jobs such as corrections officers, health care providers, administrative, information technology workers, etc.

The facility is expected to be completed by July of 2010.

Agriculture in Santa Rosa County and our Region

We all know that agriculture plays a bigger role in our life than just growing peanuts and cotton. It is a part of our economy, our quality of life, and our environmental well being. Now we can see our products being sold locally providing us with a tastier, more nutritional and more diverse produce selection.

So much is going on to enhance and protect our agricultural community and TEAM has been tasked with getting that word out. To that end, in addition to the speaking opportunities and general advertising, TEAM is working on a website to better tell the story of agriculture in our area. If you go to www.TeamSantaRosa.com and click on Agribusiness, you'll see

the beginning of the story. There is information on:

- the research going on in our own back yard through the University of Florida's West Florida Research and Education Center
- the annual Agribusiness Conference which the Santa Rosa County Planning and Zoning is working on to protect our rural culture through the Rural Development Plan
- how bio-energy is beginning to play a role in our area
- Panhandle Fresh Marketing Association

As we hope most everyone knows... if you see the Panhandle Fresh logo in your local Wal-Mart, you know you are buying produce from your neighbors in this area. While this site is "under construction," you will soon see stories about the farmers participating with

PFMA, the products that are coming out of the fields. For example, in April all you will see in your local Wal-Marts are greens and maybe some strawberries, but what we hear is they are sold as soon as they hit the shelves. By Memorial Day you will start to see much more and we hope the website will let you know what is in stock. We also plan a blog where we can see your ideas about what you want to see on the shelves and which stores you'd like to carry local produce.

